

REMARKS

This is in response to the Official Action currently outstanding with respect to the above-identified application.

Claims 1-4 and 6-17 were present in this application as of the time of the issuance of the currently outstanding Official Action. By the foregoing Amendment, Applicants have amended Claims 1 and 14 so as to make specific subject matter that was heretofore inherent in those claims. No claims have been added, and no claims have been deleted by the foregoing Amendment. Further, no new matter has been introduced into this application by the foregoing amendments. Finally, it is respectfully submitted that the foregoing amendments to the claims of this application place this application in condition for allowance. A "**VERSION SHOWING CHANGES MADE TO THE CLAIMS**" is attached as required by the Rules. Accordingly, Claims 1-4 and 6-17 as amended either directly or indirectly by the amendment of a base claim above remain under active prosecution in this case.

More specifically, it is noted that in the currently outstanding Official Action, the Examiner has:

1. Acknowledged Applicants' claim for foreign priority under 35 USC 119(a)-(d), and indicated that the required certified copies of the priority document have been received by the United States Patent and Trademark Office.

2. Acknowledged that this Continuing Prosecution Application has been appropriately established.

3. Rejected Claims 1-4, 6-10, 12 and 14-17 under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Szuki et al reference (U.S. Patent No. 5,923,013) in view of the Tanaka et al reference (U.S. Patent No. 5,682,549).

4. Rejected Claim 11 as being unpatentable under 35 USC 103(a) over the Suzuki et al reference in view the Tanaka et al reference, and further in view of the Morikawa reference (U.S. Patent No. 5,960,247).

5. Rejected Claim 13 as being unpatentable under 35 USC 103(a) over the Suzuki et al reference in view the Tanaka et al reference, and further in view of the Kusumoto reference (U.S. Patent No. 6,088,135).

6. Indicated that Applicants' previous arguments with respect to Claims 1-4 and 6-17 have been considered, but are deemed to be moot in view of the new grounds of rejection stated in the currently outstanding Official Action.

At the outset, Applicants thank the Examiner for the courtesy accorded to their undersigned attorney during a telephone interview held on 8 July 2002. During the course of that interview a general discussion of the currently and previously cited references as they relate to the claims as they stood prior to the foregoing amendment was had. No substantive agreement was reached regarding any issue.

Further comment in these Remarks regarding items 1 and 2 above is not considered to be necessary.

As was the case in Applicants' Amendment After Final Rejection Under 37 CFR 1.116 in the parent of this application (filed as a Preliminary Amendment in this continued prosecution application), Applicants respectfully submit that the dependent claims of this application, namely Claims 2-4, 6-13 and 15-17, are patentable at least by virtue of their respective dependency upon allowable independent claims 1 or 14. Accordingly, additional detailed discussion of the patentability of these dependent claims is not believed to be required in these Remarks.

With respect to independent Claims 1 and 14 and the Examiner's substantive rejections, Applicants respectfully submit that just as the Suzuki et al reference taken either alone, or in combination with the Hamanaka et al reference (cited in the FINAL Official Action in the parent of this continued prosecution application), failed to disclose, teach or suggest the present invention, so too does the Examiner's presently proposed combination of the Suzuki et al reference with the Tanaka et al reference fail to disclose, teach or suggest the present invention as presently claimed. Indeed, while the Examiner suggests that his previous rejection and Applicants' argument in response thereto are moot in view of the new grounds of rejection stated in the currently outstanding Official Action, the fact remains that the only difference between the former rejections and the currently outstanding rejections is the Examiner's reliance upon the Tanaka et al reference instead of the Hamanaka et al reference. Applicants respectfully submit that to the extent that there are substantive differences between the above-mentioned rejections, those differences are insufficient to overcome Applicants' previously stated substantive position in this case.

In particular, it is Applicants' position that just as the Hamanaka et al reference deals with the management of information on a page-by-page basis, so too does the Tanaka et al reference currently relied upon by the Examiner.

Specifically, the Examiner currently contends that the Tanaka et al reference at Column 8, lines 20-38, and at Column 2, lines 13-15, teaches an image data management system comprising a management table wherein input request and input completion requests of image data are managed by a management table. It is to be recognized, however, that while Tanaka et al at Column 1, line 41, and at Column 5, line 47, uses the term "individual data" in a manner that might be argued to support the Examiner's interpretation of the reference, those isolated uses of the term "individual data" do not clearly teach, disclose or suggest "each image data" as that term is used in the present application. Rather, the clear meaning of the term "individual" as used in the Tanaka et al specification taken as a whole is respectfully submitted to be synonymous with the term "personal" (Note: the cited Tanaka et al reference uses the term "owner's identifier" and associated document names in connection with its data registration function. The significance of this is apparent from the English abstract of the Tanaka et al priority document that discusses an "image data or a pointer is conveniently stored under a personal file name in a storage location in a network").

In addition, attention is respectfully called to that facts that Tanaka et al specifically teaches:

1. "sent page number 609" of the input management table 601 (Column 6, lines 14-41)

2. "date and hour of image data inputting 707 representing the date and hour when one sheet has been read in the beginning of image data forming one document" (Column 7, lines 4-6)
3. "transmission data containing 'sent page number 609' of the input management table (Column 7, lines 22-30)

Applicants respectfully submit, therefore, that the Tanaka et al reference clearly does not teach, disclose or suggest the feature of the present invention that each image data input is managed by a management table on an image basis as each image data is inputted from the image data input means. This point, which was inherent in the claims previously pending in this application, now has been made specific by the foregoing amendments to the independent Claims 1 and 14. The inherency of this point in the previous claims is supported by the fact that the present specification (which is to be utilized in the determination of the meaning and scope of the claims) states:

"With this arrangement, since the image data is processed according to its management information managed in the management table, it is possible to manage the image processing so that appropriate image processing is applied to each inputted image data, and that time-wasting image processing is not applied to image data improperly inputted." (Page 7, lines 17-23 and Page 59, last 7 lines);

"The image input table 701 manages information relating to image data and processing conditions, for each image data inputted through the scanner section 204 (31), the facsimile board 603, the printer board 601, etc."
(Page 41, lines 8-12);

"The document ID information 702 is an identification number for identifying each page of inputted document images" (Last three lines of Page 41)

"The read image number information 706 indicates how many images are inputted as the image data of one page through an input section such as the scanner section 204 (31)."
(Page 42, lines 9-12)

Accordingly, as discussed previously, the following features also are not disclosed, taught or suggested by the art currently relied upon by the Examiner:

(i) input completion information showing completion of an input of **each** input image data, and input request information showing a request for transmitting **each** input image data from the image processing means are managed in connection with **each** corresponding input image data stored in the image data storage means (as specifically disclosed in the present specification at page 40, lines 18-20 and at page 42, lines 12-25); and

(ii) output completion information showing completion of an output of **each** processed input image data which was processed by the image processing means, and output request information showing a request for outputting **each** processed input image data from the image output means are managed in connection with **each** corresponding input image data stored in the image data storing means (as specifically disclosed in the present specification at Page 40, lines 18-20, page 45, lines 2-7).

Therefore, also as previously mentioned, with the above feature (i), if the input of images is interrupted by trouble, for example, it is possible to perform the instructed image processing with respect to image data of images which previous to the trouble had been completely inputted; to recognize which image data has not been inputted; and to give an instruction to restart the input and image processing of remaining images. Hence, in the present invention, by managing input request information together with input completion information, the claimed device provides more accurate control measure capabilities than those disclosed, taught or suggested by the cited prior art (see, page 7, line 24 to page 8, line 7 of the present specification).

Further, with the above feature (ii), even in the case of trouble such as a jam in the image output section, a recovery in the output process can be made accurately while at the same time recalling how far the image processing has advanced. Hence, in the present invention, by managing output request information together with output completion information, the claimed device provides more accurate control measure capabilities than those disclosed, taught or suggested by the cited prior art (see, page 5, line 19 to page 6, line 8 of the present specification).

Similarly, the Suzuki et al. reference is quite clear to the effect that it deals with a system for managing print jobs on a job or a page basis. Further, a close reading of the Suzuki et al reference leads to the definite conclusion that when Suzuki et al speaks in terms of job basis printing, the reference is intended to be to the printing of multiple pages, not to the handling of individual images among many images on any given page. In addition, there is no disclosure or suggestion in the Suzuki et al disclosure of which Applicants are aware that contemplates or would otherwise lead one skilled in the art to create a system such as the presently claimed invention wherein data input can be resumed from the point at which it left off (i.e., with the next succeeding incompletely inputted image on any given page) after encountering trouble such as a jam.

Consequently, it is respectfully submitted that upon reconsideration the Examiner will agree with the Applicants that the Claims of this application as presented hereinabove are clearly patentable over the cited references under the terms of 35 USC 103(a). The cited references are concerned with the management and processing of input data on a complete page basis, not on the basis of input individual images. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that the present invention as now claimed is patentably distinct from the cited references, whether those references are considered alone or in combination with one another. A decision so holding in response to this communication is respectfully requested.

For each and all of the foregoing reasons, it is believed that the claims of this application as they will stand upon the entry of the foregoing Amendment are in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of this application and the allowance of Claims 1-4 and 6-17 in response to this communication, therefore, are respectfully requested.

Applicants believe that additional fees are not required in connection with the consideration of this response to the currently outstanding Official Action. However, if for any reason a fee is required, a fee paid is inadequate or credit is owed for any excess fee paid, you are hereby authorized and requested to charge and/or credit Deposit Account No. **04-1105**, as necessary, for the correct payment of all fees which may be due in connection with the filing and consideration of this communication.

Respectfully submitted,

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VERSION SHOWING CHANGES MADE TO AMENDED CLAIMS

Additions shown underlined; Deletions shown in brackets.

Please amend Claims 1 and 14 as follows:

1. (Four Times Amended) An image processing device which comprises image data input means for inputting image data, image data storage means for storing input image data received from said image data input means, image data confirmation means for confirming characteristics of each input image data, management table means for managing on an image basis as each image data is inputted from the image data input means the characteristics of each input image data confirmed by said image data confirmation means as management information of said each input image data with reference to the corresponding each input image data stored in said image data storage means, and image processing means for performing image processing with respect to said each input image data,

wherein:

said management table means manages input request information indicative of a request for transmitting each processed input image data from said image processing means, and input completion information indicative of the completion of an input of said each input image data responsive to said request in connection with the corresponding each input image data stored in said image data storage means.

14. (Thrice Amended) An image processing device, comprising:
- image data input means for inputting image data;
 - image data input management table means for managing each input image data on an image basis as each image data is inputted from the image data input means;
 - first image data storage means for storing each image data [to be inputted];
 - image processing means for carrying out image processing with respect to each inputted image data;
 - second image data storage means for storing each processed input image data obtained by performing image processing with respect to said each input image data by said image processing means; and
 - input request information/input completion information/processing completion information management table means for managing input request information indicative of a request for transmitting each processed input image data from said image processing means, and input completion information indicative of the completion of an input of said each input image data in connection with the corresponding each input image data stored in said first image data storage means, and for managing processing completion information indicative of the completion of image processing with respect to said each input image data by said image processing means in connection with the corresponding each processed input image data stored in said second image data storage means.